

Current Happenings with In Home TN in Smoky Mountain

In June 2013, the Smoky Mountain region held two large community stakeholder meetings where a combined approximately 180 partners participated in an open, documented discussion around the ability of the community to provide for the needs of the region's most vulnerable families and children. After the meeting, the region's In Home Tennessee leadership team (comprised of both DCS and community partners) reviewed the data collected and chose to focus on the priorities outlined below.

Current Areas of Focus:

Smoky Mountain is currently working on the priorities of **Engaging the Faith-Based Community, Enhancing Claiborne County, Visitation Centers/Services, and on Communication/Collaboration with Stakeholders.**

The **Engaging the Faith-Based Community** or the FBI (Faith-Based Initiative) is a workgroup that began in the latter months of 2014. As the name suggests, individuals involved in this group are attempting to unify the faith-based community in select counties in order to meet the needs of the children and families in the area. The group hopes to review the services already offered by these groups and then identify and address any needs.

The **Enhancing Claiborne County** workgroup, affectionately calling themselves "We Love Claiborne," began their work in early 2015 and is focusing specifically on the services available in Claiborne County. This particular county has been targeted for support from private providers and the faith-based community, and the group will hold a community event in summer 2015 to rally participants to help bridge the service gaps in the county.

The **Family Visitation Services/Centers** workgroup began their work in late 2013 and has recently had huge success in securing new services! As of summer 2015, Carson Newman University and Helen Ross McNabb will be partnering together to begin a visitation program in Jefferson County. This program will serve as a pilot and is hoped to be replicated in other, surrounding counties, pending its success.

The **Communication/Collaboration with Stakeholders** workgroup is focused on ensuring better, clearer, and more consistent communication between the child welfare professionals in the region. This group is also striving to ensure child welfare workers, including school and juvenile court personnel are aware of the resources for families/children in the area and that they are easily able to link families and make referrals for services.

In Summer 2015, this group also hopes to start a quarterly community collaboration meeting similar to the Integrated Community Action Meeting (ICAM) that currently occurs in Knox County.

The Beginning of In Home TN in Smoky Mountain

The Smoky Mountain region began the In Home Tennessee enhancement in June 2013. A follow up community stakeholder meeting was held in September 2013 where a summary of the findings assessment discussions were presented. Areas to be addressed first were visitation services (discussed above) and mentoring for parents.

Get involved!

Contact the Regional Project Leads, Wendy Williamson at Wendy.Williamson@tn.gov or Angie Ryan at Angela.H.Ryan@tn.gov to get involved with In Home Tennessee in Smoky Mountain.

Last updated: April 2015